

As he carries out his new duties, Mike McConnell will be relying on the thousands of dedicated intelligence professionals who work day and night to keep us safe. They are America's first line of defense against the terrorists. And while many of their accomplishments must remain secret to our fellow citizens, those accomplishments are known to me. And they're doing good work. You're doing good work. And the American people owe you a strong debt of gratitude. I appreciate your willingness to take on the difficult and dangerous assignments. And you just need to know, you've got the full support of this Government and the American people.

Our intelligence community is going to have an able leader in Mike McConnell. I want to thank Congress for swiftly confirming Mike to this vital position. I look forward to working with him as a key member of my national security team. I'm anxious to have him in that Oval Office every morning. *[Laughter]* I hope he's anxious to show up. *[Laughter]*

He'll find that I value the intelligence products that you create. He's going to find that the intelligence product is an important part of my strategic thought and important part of helping me get this Government to respond to do our most important duty, which is to protect you. I look forward to working with Mike. I'm comfortable in knowing this is a good man who cares about one thing only, and that's his country. And I thank his family for supporting him as he returns to Government service.

And now I ask my Chief of Staff, Josh Bolten, to administer the oath of office.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. at Bolling Air Force Base. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director McConnell.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on Health Care

*February 20, 2007*

I just had a very interesting discussion with people who are deeply concerned about the status of health care in America today. These men and women around the table are

charged with designing products for businesses, both large and small, and individuals.

And I discussed my health care plan that would allow—would equalize the Tax Code so that the individual would be more likely to be able to purchase a plan, because I believe a good health care system is one that rewards the consumer, encourages the consumer, and makes sure the consumer has got the capacity to make viable choices. And when you have consumers in charge of their health care decisions, it is a force that is likely to keep the health care costs down.

And so part of our discussion was, how do we encourage the development of an individual market? And I thank you very much for your insights and your concerns about the current health—the state of health care today in America.

I have the duty to talk to the American people about what I think will be a better alternative than one in which the Federal Government makes the health care decisions for the patient and the provider. And I laid out such a plan in my State of the Union.

And now I call upon Members of the Congress to analyze this plan very carefully, to recognize the best decisions are made between the patients and their providers, and to work with the administration in a bipartisan fashion to make sure that health care is accessible and affordable for as many Americans as is possible.

We have a duty here in Washington to take care of the poor, the disabled, and the elderly, and we're meeting that duty. And now we have a duty to make sure the health care system is responsive to the American people, and I look forward to working with Democrats and Republicans to do just that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:53 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Memorandum on Designation of Officers of the Office of the United States Trade Representative To Act as the United States Trade Representative**

February 20, 2007

*Memorandum for the United States Trade Representative*

*Subject:* Designation of Officers of the Office of the United States Trade Representative to Act as the United States Trade Representative

By the authority vested in me as President under the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, 5 U.S.C. 3345, *et seq.*, it is hereby ordered that:

**Section 1. Order of Succession.**

During any period when the United States Trade Representative (USTR) has died, resigned, or otherwise becomes unable to perform the functions and duties of the office of the United States Trade Representative, the following officers of the Office of the United States Trade Representative, in the order listed, shall perform the functions and duties of the USTR, until such time as the USTR is able to perform the functions and duties of that office;

(a) Deputy United States Trade Representatives (stationed in Washington, D.C.; in order of their length of service as a Deputy USTR);

(b) Deputy United States Trade Representative (stationed in Geneva);

(c) General Counsel;

(d) Chief Negotiator for Agriculture;

(e) Deputy General Counsel; and

(f) Deputy Chief of Mission (stationed in Geneva).

**Sec. 2. Exceptions.**

(a) No individual who is serving in an office listed in section 1 in an acting capacity, by virtue of so serving, shall act as the USTR pursuant to this memorandum.

(b) No individual shall act as USTR unless that individual is otherwise eligible to so serve under the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of this memorandum, the President retains discretion, to the extent permitted by law, to depart from this memorandum in designating an acting USTR.

**Sec. 3. Judicial Review.** This memorandum is intended to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

**Sec. 4. Publication.** You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:48 a.m., February 21, 2007]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on February 22.

**Remarks in a Discussion on Health Care in Chattanooga, Tennessee**

February 21, 2007

**The President.** Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm honored to be here. Jim, thank you. We just toured a pretty fantastic hospital. He talked about robotics that are being used to operate on. He said that I was on the machine, and he's right, but there wasn't anybody at the other end of the machine, you'll be happy to hear. [Laughter]

I want to talk today about health care. I see people wearing our uniform—I want to thank you for wearing the uniform. I am the Commander in Chief, and proudly so. I'm also the educator in chief. The job of the educator in chief is to try to educate people about different ways to solve major problems facing our country, and we've got a problem with health care. It's not affordable, and it's not accessible to too many of our people. And the fundamental question is, how to deal with it? And so today we're going to have a conversation with experts. We've got people who call themselves experts, like me and the Secretary and the Governor. And we got people